

J.M. Mehta



75

Ways

to

Happiness

A Collection of Value-Based Stories



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A Collection of Value-Based Stories

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Published by:



F-2/16, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002

☎ 011-23240026, 011-23240027 • Fax: 011-23240028

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ISBN 978-935-05721-0-8

Edition: April 2012

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Publisher's Note

It's often said that Values, Morals and Ethics are intricately tied together. Values are what we learn from childhood; Morals are the intrinsic beliefs developed over our lifespan and Ethics are how we actually behave in the face of difficult situations that test our moral fibre. Hence, imbibing the right values in life is a must for everyone, who seeks happiness and bliss.

It is true that in our busy life schedule, we hardly get time to think and understand the significance of values, such as honesty, sincerity, faith, kindness, etc. Nonetheless, these values form the basis of our lives, families or the society, as a whole. We can inculcate these values by keeping a good company or by reading some good books teaching us the right values and morals of life for becoming a good person.

The book, *75 Ways to Happiness*, is a collection of such value-based stories in which each story teaches us some good value of life, as mentioned above through a short and interesting incident which we can easily relate to our day to day life. There is a box at the end of each story named "Something Extra" which highlights the moral or the value hidden in the story. The language used in the book is simple and lucid, and thus it can reach and enlighten people of almost all age groups.

Hope you enjoy reading these fascinating stories, and learn from them the values that can bring happiness into your lives...

Preface

A few years ago, I came across a book in English—titled ‘Chicken Soup for the Souls...’ It was one of the best sellers of that time. For me, its title appeared both interesting as well as funny! Different versions of this book have been published with similar titles. However, the ‘chicken soup’ remained the main ingredient. Each book contained different stories about efforts made by people in different spheres of life. Most of these stories were interesting and inspiring.

What intrigued me about this book was its funny title — ‘Chicken soup for the Souls!’ I wondered why the soul should be made to feed on the ‘chicken soup’. I could not reconcile with the thought that the souls in Europe, America or elsewhere were fond of non-vegetarian food.

Anyway, without the best intention to enter into any controversy in this matter, I must admit that I was also inspired to collect relevant stories with an Indian or oriental background. Consequently, I have been able to compile a collection of 162 such micro-stories — thanks to the persistent efforts of several years. Out of these, about 75 stories have been compiled in this book. The main function of these stories is to ignite the process of thinking in relation to the various situations arising in human life. The reader may align himself with a story and deduce morals which may enable him to confront his own problems and find appropriate solutions.

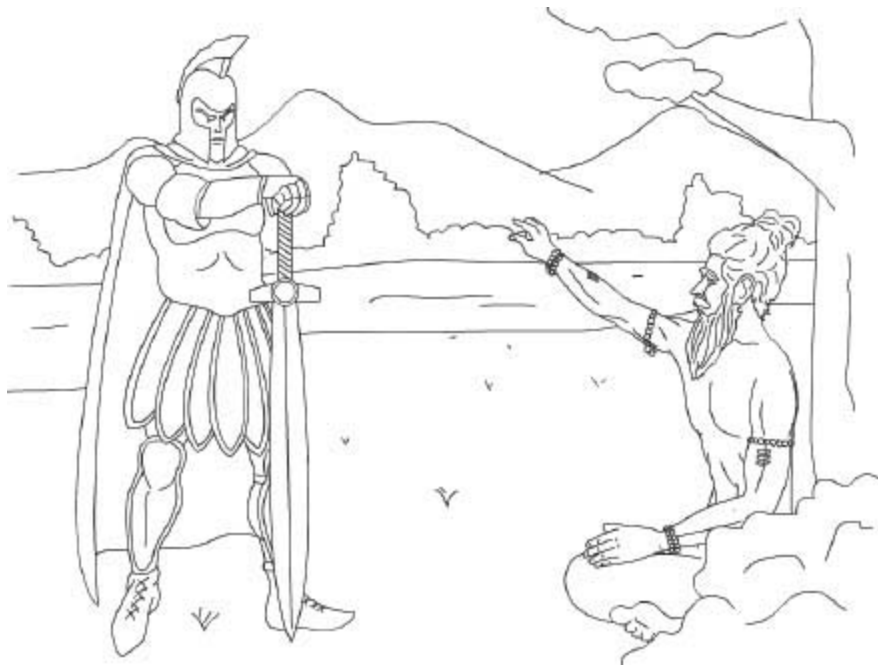
I hope the stories contained in this book, some of which are true while others are fictitious, should serve as a healthy tonic to the minds and the souls of all general readers.

However, the stuff is pure vegetarian, but no less nutritious!

Alexander and the Saint

The Broken Myth of Owning the World!

After conquering many countries, Emperor Alexander invaded India, where he met a naked saint, whose words opened the Conqueror's eyes!



Alexander on seeing the naked saint told him, "You have nothing." The saint laughed and said: "The whole universe is mine. I have it without invading it." Alexander said, "How can anyone win the world without conquering it?" The saint replied: "I have won over the Creator of this world. When I own the creator, the whole creation is mine. The way of my conquest is different from yours. I conquer, not by sword, but by surrendering myself!" Alexander was impressed by this reply and felt very pleased. Alexander said, "I too have conquered the world." In response the saint said, "Just imagine for a while that you are lost deep in a desert and are

extremely thirsty. Then I appear before you with a jug of water and offer the same to you for a price. In case, you are about to die for water, how much of your kingdom can you give me for a jug of life saving water.”

Alexander replied: “I shall be prepared to give half of my kingdom.”

The saint said: “Suppose I do not sell my water at that price.” Alexander told that he would be ready to give his whole kingdom to save his life. The saint laughed and said: “Then, in that case, only one jug of water is the price of your whole kingdom for which you have wasted your entire life.”

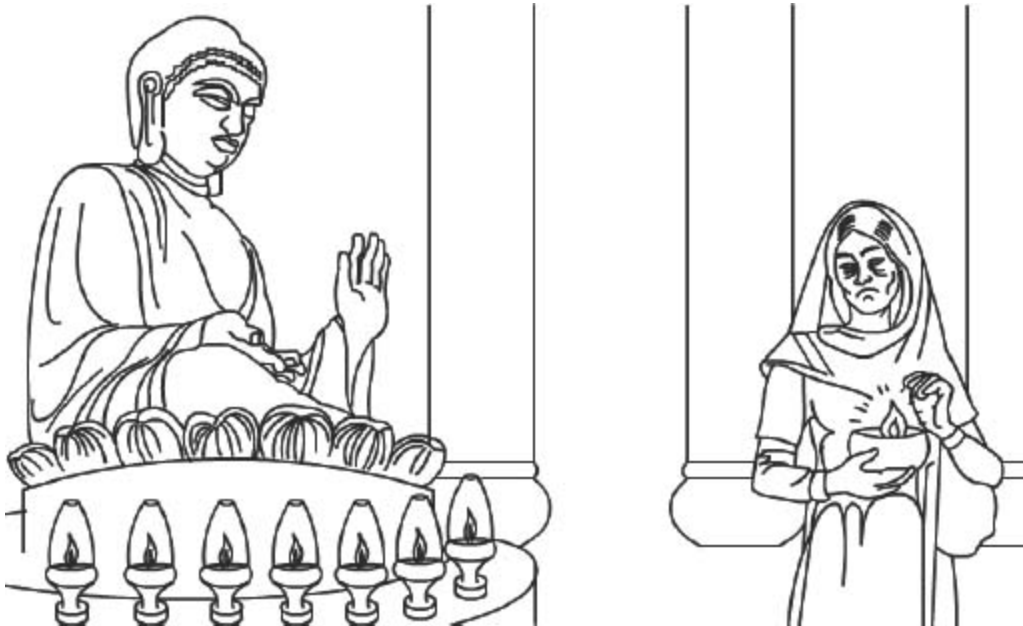
These words of the saint had great impact on the mind of Alexander that he gave up the idea of further conquests. This incident which changed his thinking was also one of the reasons which prompted him to return to his country.



The Light of Devotion

Difference between pretence and serious work will show up any day!

In order to show off their love and respect to Lord Buddha, rich devotees used to light costly lamps as offerings to him. A very poor woman, who had great love and respect for Buddha, noticed this and she too wanted to offer a lamp, but was too poor to buy one.



Nevertheless, she worked hard, begged and raised a small amount to buy an earthen lamp and filled it with some oil and small cotton wick. She prayed earnestly and begged Buddha to accept her humble offering. Next morning, it came to the notice of one of the chief disciples of lord Buddha that barring a little earthen lamp, all other lamps were extinguished. The little earthen lamp was still burning and was full of oil and wick. He communicated this strange happening to the Lord, who said, “This lamp is lit with the wick of

devotion and the oil of sincerity. Nothing will put out this light. Let us all bestow our inner selves with this type of light.”

Here, the light is the symbol of inner peace, love and devotion. And all human beings should fill their inner self with light like this.



Unselfish Love

The Milk of Human kindness knows no barriers and animals are no exception!

This is a touching story of a very kind person who bought two pups for a distant relative who lived in far off city. He carried the pups by train to deliver them to his relative.



On his way to the relative's house, after getting down from the train in a hired taxi, he asked the driver to halt at a roadside *dhaba* (eatery) to feed the pups with some milk. The taxi stopped in front of a hut which was a small *dhaba*. The gentleman asked the owner for some milk for the pups. An old woman came out and picked up the pups with great love and fed them fondly with milk in a bowl. She told the man that she too had two pups but they were killed by a careless driver on the roadside. The old woman showered all the love and affection on the two pups even though they did not belong to her. Admiring her kind attitude, the man was greatly surprised at

the conduct of the poorly dressed old woman and offered her money for the milk. She did not accept the money, washed the pups, kissed them and gave them to the owner reluctantly. She said, “Sir, they also have life, never be cruel to them.” There were tears in her eyes when she said these words and looked at the pups with great love as the man took them away. The love and affection that old woman showered on the pups, was like the love from a mother’s heart for her own children, untainted and unselfish!



A Memorable Gift

Patience is a shield against future regrets!

A young man was very fond of a sports car, exhibited in a dealer's showroom, and told his rich father about it. What followed can be interesting....

At his graduation, the young man expected his father to gift that car to him. On the morning of his graduation, his father called him and gave his son a gift box. When the son opened it, he found a holy book inside. Angrily he shouted, "With all your riches, you give me just a book!" and left the house and the book.



After several years, the young man became a rich businessman. He realised that he must get back to his father, who had grown old. Just then, he received a telegram informing him of his father's death. When he returned to his father's house, he came to know that his father had willed him all his property and possessions. As he was searching through important papers, he found the same holy book

which his father had gifted him at his graduation. Beneath the book he found an envelope, taped and contained papers for a sports car, with the dealer's name. On the papers, the date of graduation was written, along with words, 'PAID IN FULL' what a surprise!



Who is Your Real Friend?

Noble Deeds double up as Friends and Fame in life!

A person was accidentally framed for a crime that he did not commit. He was issued a warrant.

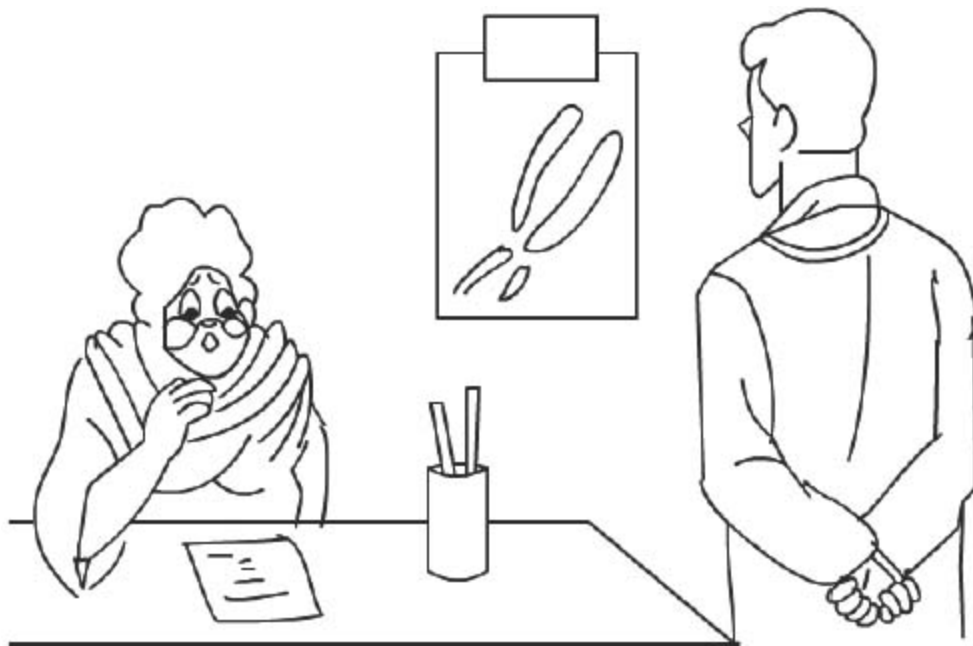
He had three friends and he asked one of them to testify to his innocence as a witness. The friend said, "I cannot move out of this house. But can help you only from here." He, therefore, had to approach others. The second friend said, "I can come up to the doorway of the court but will not enter the witness box."



The third friend said, "I will speak for you, wherever you want me to come." This is the story of our life. The first is PROPERTY which can hear witness only within the house. The second is RELATIVES who would come till the cemetery. The third friend is one's own virtues and noble deeds which continue to shine even after death and stand witness for a long time to come.

*The good thoughts and actions of life
will serve as good friends who will
bring peace and progress.*

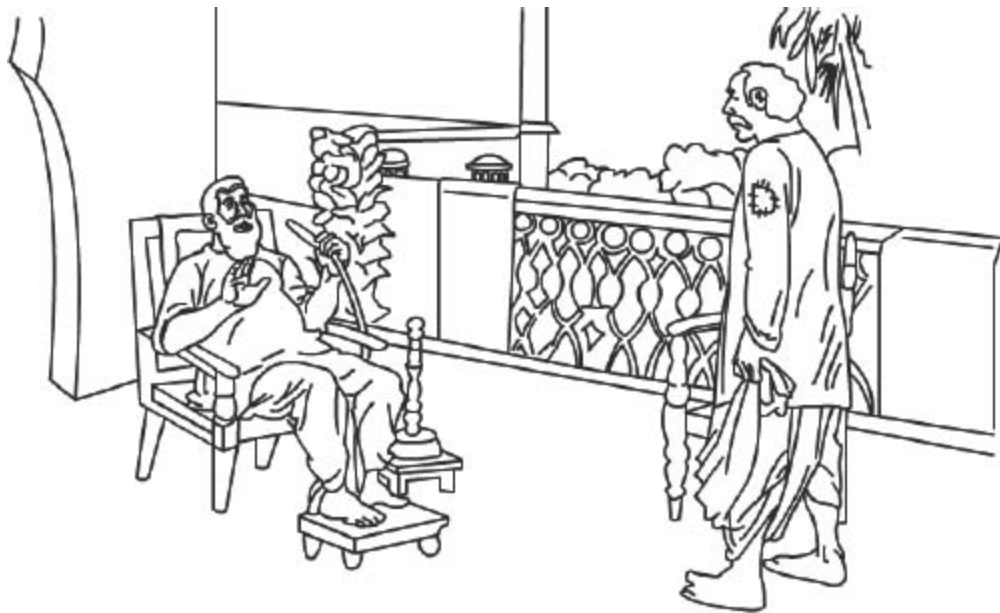






Something Extra

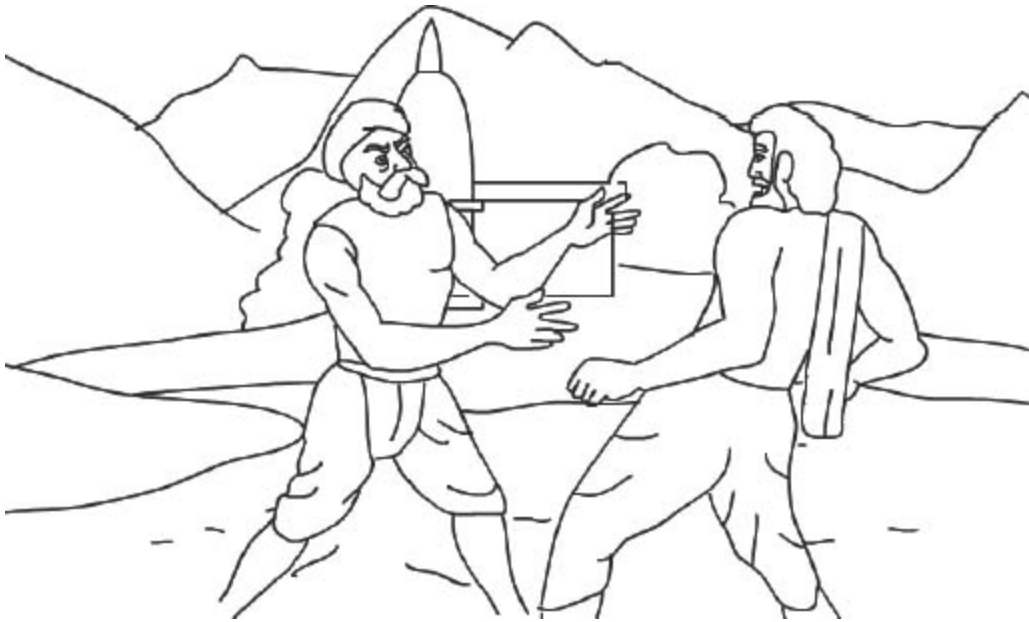
- ♦ *Never wait for a solution till a problem completely overwhelms you.*
- ♦ *Preventing a disease is easier than curing it.*
- ♦ *Anxiety delays action and is no solution to a problem.*





Something Extra

- ♦ *Anticipate your urgencies in advance and plan accordingly.*
- ♦ *Rich may have money but they behave as more insecure.*





Something Extra

- ♦ *Virtue always triumphs over the wicked.*
- ♦ *Allow the wicked to understand the evil and give them an opportunity to change.*
- ♦ *Real wisdom lies in not getting provoked by the pranks of idiots.*





Something Extra

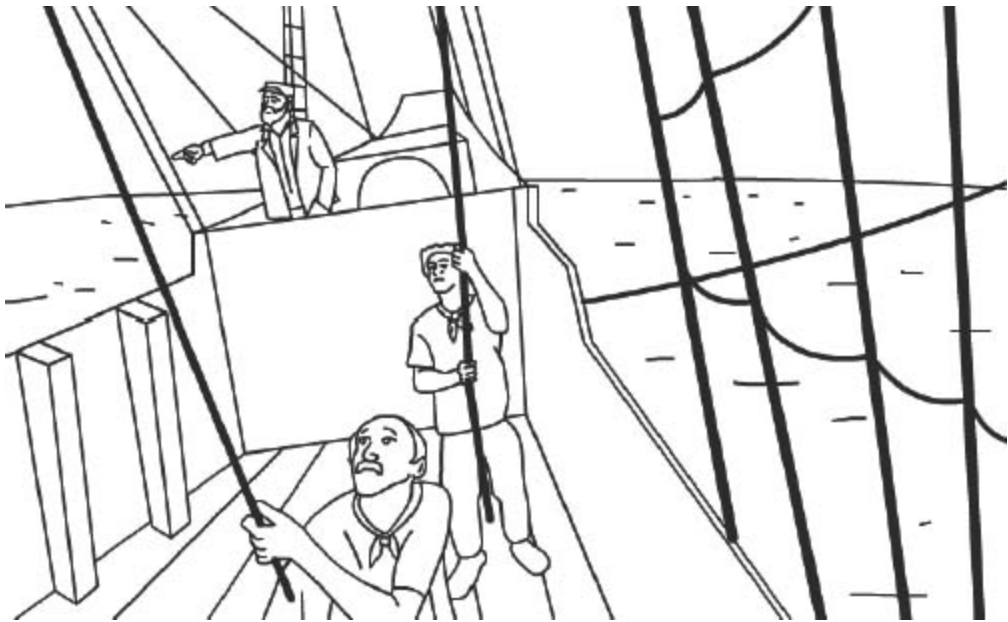
- ♦ *Think before passing judgement on others.*
- ♦ *Work positively to raise ones' own worth.*
- ♦ *Forgive the erred and give opportunity to improve.*





Something Extra

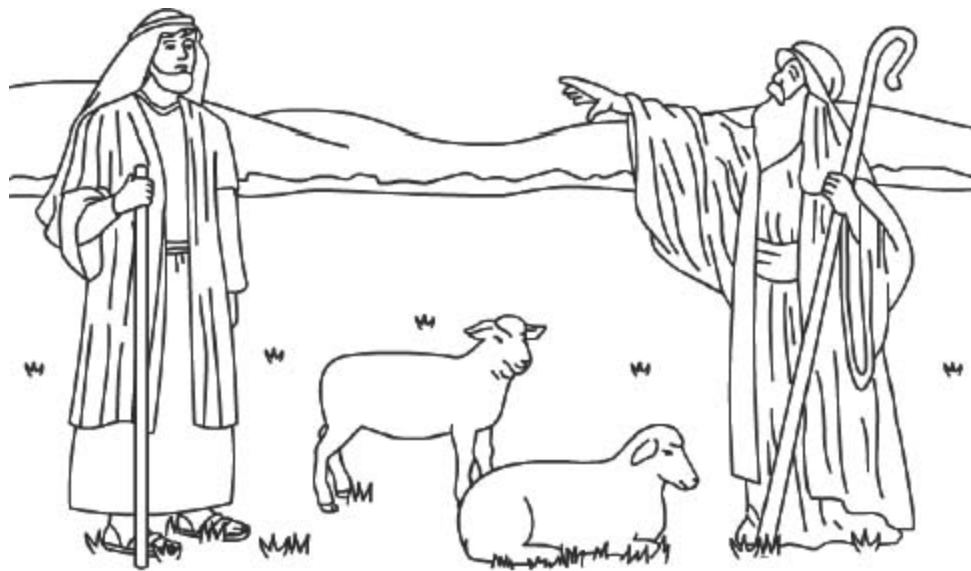
- ♦ *Always confront challenges of all kinds.*
- ♦ *Facing a situation builds up courage and determination.*
- ♦ *Perform any task with utmost sincerity.*





Something Extra

- ♦ *Originality is the key to success..*
- ♦ *Always strive for perfection.*
- ♦ *One cannot excel if one imitates.*





Something Extra

- ♦ *Double check before speaking on behalf of any authority.*
- ♦ *Never misinterpret messages to suit personal interests.*
- ♦ *Always encourage creative people.*





Something Extra

- ♦ *Nobody is perfect.*
- ♦ *See the positive things first in a person.*
- ♦ *Approach people positively.*





Something Extra

- ♦ *Be genuine in your work.*
- ♦ *Never try to please for the sake of it.*
- ♦ *Make the mind joyful with a right occupation.*





Something Extra

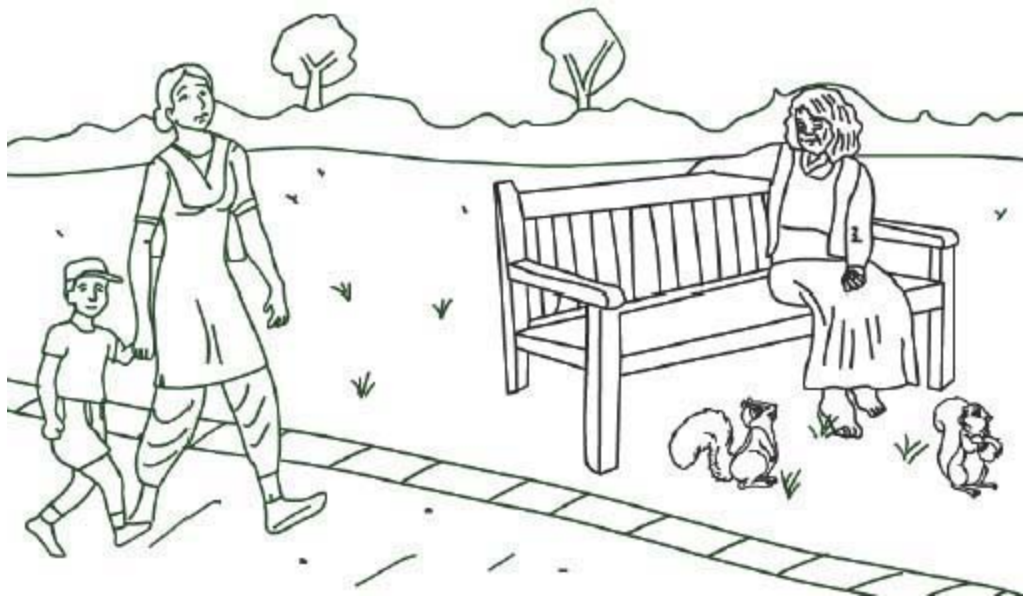
- ♦ *Be compassionate to the sick and aged.*
- ♦ *Speak kindly to rejuvenate any desperate person.*
- ♦ *Always remember and acknowledge those who made a difference in your life.*





Something Extra

- ♦ *Be alert about your personal belongings.*
- ♦ *When something is lost, do not panic.*
- ♦ *Search widely without ruling out options.*





Something Extra

- ◆ *Never decide the worth of a person just by the appearance.*
- ◆ *Concern for other living beings can deflect your mind from worries.*
- ◆ *Poverty should never choke the mind.*





Something Extra

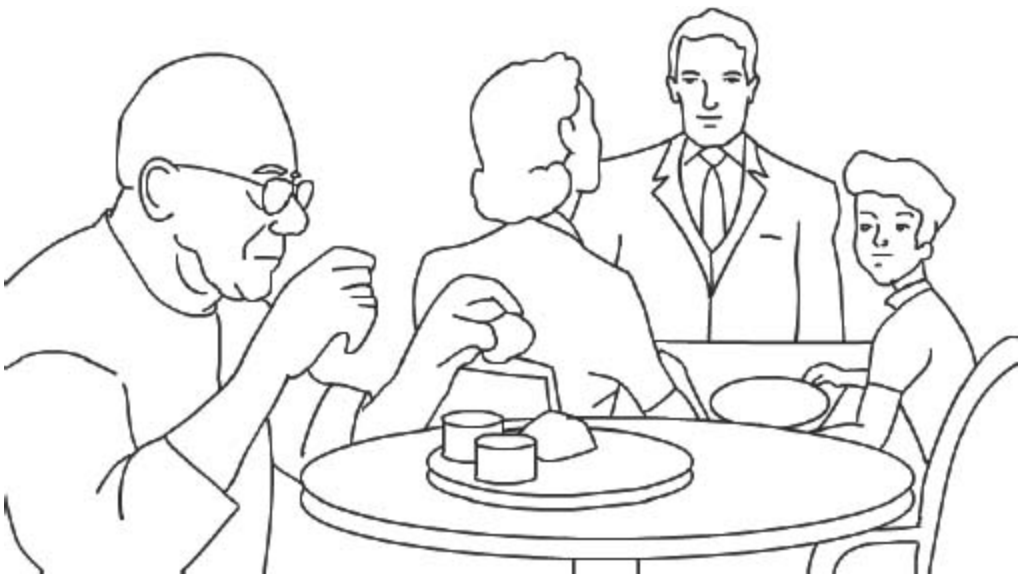
- ◆ *Never give false promises to any one.*
- ◆ *A newborn always deserves a better life.*
- ◆ *Always be accountable for your actions.*





Something Extra

- ♦ *There is a definite purpose behind all actions.*
- ♦ *Positive acts lead to positive results.*
- ♦ *Take time to assist elders in domestic work.*





Something Extra

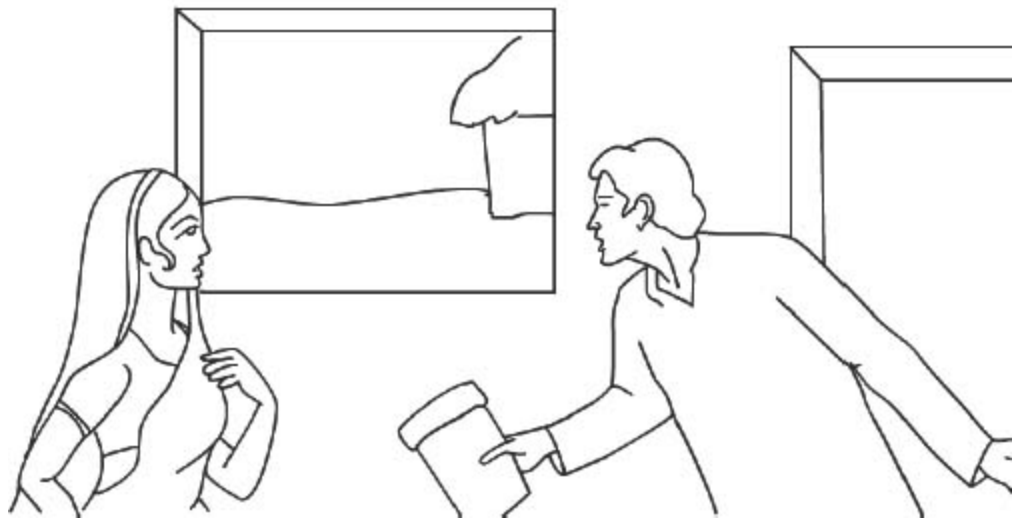
- ◆ *Respect your parents and treat them with love and care.*
- ◆ *Present oneself as a good model to the child.*
- ◆ *Every action has an equal and opposite reaction.*





Something Extra

- ♦ *No individual should live like an island.*
- ♦ *Small helps can make the society more beautiful.*
- ♦ *Keep an eye on the outer world and be kind and generous.*





Something Extra

- ♦ *Happiness doubles when you make someone happy.*
- ♦ *Never be a slave of personal comforts.*
- ♦ *Develop a sense of humour.*





Something Extra

- ♦ *Harsh words give hard feelings.*
- ♦ *Speak soothingly and make it a habit.*
- ♦ *Polite words can still send a strong message.*





Something Extra

- ♦ *Earn your food from your hard work.*
- ♦ *Eat only when you are really hungry.*
- ♦ *You get the food you deserve.*





Something Extra

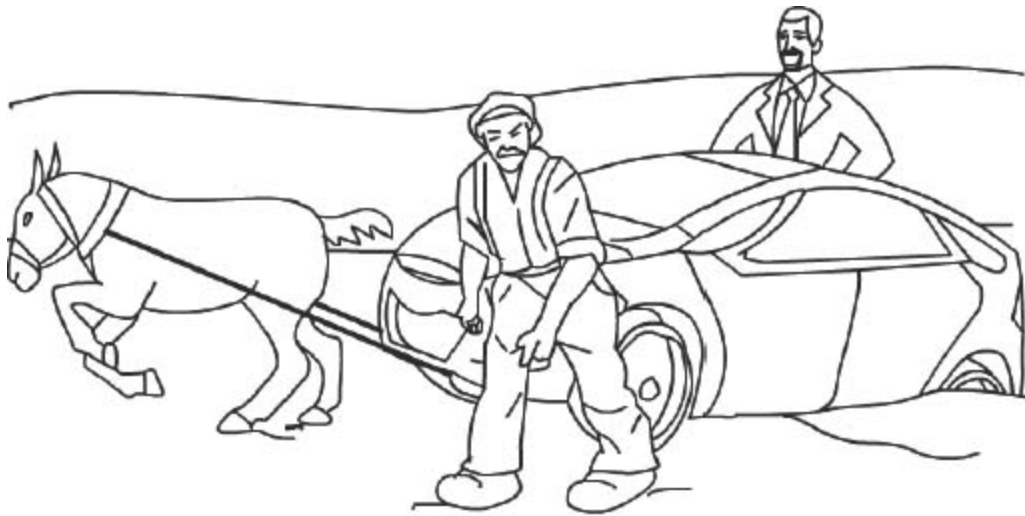
- ◆ *Keep the mind pure and positive.*
- ◆ *Any pretence of greatness will be exposed one day.*
- ◆ *Honest penance can wash away all your sins.*





Something Extra

- ◆ *Treat all the children with the same amount of love.*
- ◆ *Provide them with equal opportunities.*
- ◆ *Never try to be a burden on any one.*





Something Extra

- ♦ *Solo work never gives good results.*
- ♦ *Work within a team.*
- ♦ *Nothing beats a team effort.*





Something Extra

- ♦ *Turn protests into positive actions.*
- ♦ *Try to provide others with the facilities you missed.*
- ♦ *Work for improving the lot of others.*





Something Extra

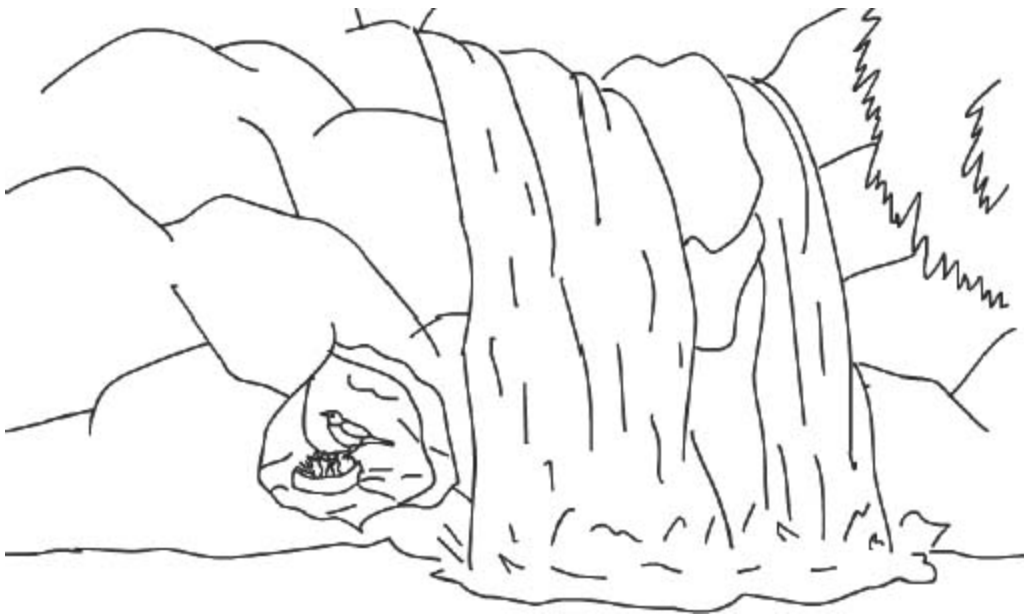
- ♦ *Maintain good food habits.*
- ♦ *Be quality conscious in your eating habits.*
- ♦ *Eat those food items that keep you healthy and energetic.*





Something Extra

- ◆ *Understand the pain of others.*
- ◆ *Try to support people in moments of crisis.*
- ◆ *It is not the size of help but a supportive nature that counts.*





Something Extra

- ♦ *Peace is not grave like silence.*
- ♦ *Staying calm amidst din is a sign of strength.*
- ♦ *Move along with the world and never run away from it.*

Thoughts of Kabir

Thoughts and words of great men always inspire us!

Kabir was a saint and one of India's greatest spiritual thinkers. As a social reformer, he tried to uplift the downtrodden and preached against useless religious rituals. He also tried to reconcile religious differences and advocated love and unity among all classes of society laying stress on honest, simple and spiritual life. He showed them the path of worship and salvation, and urged to shun orthodox practices and superstitions. Kabir expressed his thoughts in simple language and addressed the common man. Some of his profound thoughts are mentioned below for the benefit of the reader:-



When the body is burnt, it becomes ash
When it is not burnt, worms eat it up.
A soft clay vessel will break,
When water is poured into it
Such is the nature of the body.
Why, oh brother, just then puffing and blowing thyself out?

As the bee collects honey with great nest
So the fool collects wealth
When a man is dead, they say,
‘Take him away! Take him away!
Why allow a ghost to remain?’
His wedded wife accompanies him to the door,
and after that his male friends
All other members of his family,
go up till the cremation ground,
The soul departs all alone.
Who is a Hindu? Who is a Turk?
Both inhabit the same earth
One reads the Vedas, the other the Quran.
One is a Maulana, the other a Pandit.
They are like earthen vessels,
Having different names but made of the same earth.
Both are misled and have not found God.
The external forces conceal from our eyes the deep meaning of existence,
True faith resides in the heart.
Long not for a dwelling in heaven,
And fear not to dwell in hell,
What will be, will be,
O my soul, hope not at all
Sing the praises of God
From whom the supreme reward is obtained.
Be not glad at the sight of prosperity,
And grieve not at the sight of adversity:
As is prosperity, so is adversity;
What God proposes shall be accomplished.

Some of Kabir’s *dohas* in Hindi follows:-

Jahaan dayaa, wahaan dharm hai,
Jahaan lobh, tahaan paap
Jahaan krodh, wahan kaal hai,
Jahaan krishana, tahan aap.

It means kindness is the basis of true religion; greed is a sin and anger is the cause of destruction. Kabir says, to forgive is divine. In the following *doha*, Kabir advises us to cultivate humility:-

*Kabira garv na keejiye, kaal gahe kar kes
Na jaane kit mare hai, kyaa des kyaa pardesh.*

Do not nurture pride, as one does not know when and where one is destined to die.

In another *doha*, Kabir advises not to postpone ones work, as one does not know what will happen in the next moment:-

*Kaal kare so aaj kar, aaj kare so aab
Pal main parley hojagi, bahuri karega kab.*

Kabir advises against worry in the following *doha*:-

*Chintaa aise daakini, kaat kalejaa khaaye
Baid heelaraa kija karey, kalan tak dava lagaay.*

Worry is a silent killer and no medicine can cure it.

His masterpiece and popular *doha* is:-

*Kabira khadaa bazaar main, maange sabki khair
Na kohon si dosti, no kohon se bair.*

Kabir wishes welfare of all; he is neither friend nor foe to anybody.

In another *doha*, saint Kabir advises self-analysis and not to find faults in others. He says:-

*Bura jo dekhani main chala
Bura na milia koye
Jo dil khoja aapna,
Mujsa bura na koye.*

‘When I went to find a bad person, I could not find any. However, when I looked within me, I thought no one was worse than me!’ Thus we need not find faults in others, but look within ourselves

and remove our own faults. In another *doha*, kabir points towards the insecurity and miseries of life and says:-

*Chalti chakki dekh ke,
Diya kabira roye
Do patun kek beach main,
Sabut bacha na koye.*

It means that nothing remains intact between the two grinding stones; life is all full of insecurity and miseries.

*Aise vaani boliye,
Man ka aapa khoye,
Aapan ko sheetal kare,
Auron ko sukhe deye.*

In this *doha*, Kabir advises us to speak gently without pride, ego and hatred. A sweet tongue not only calms our nerves, but gives a soothing effect to the listener.

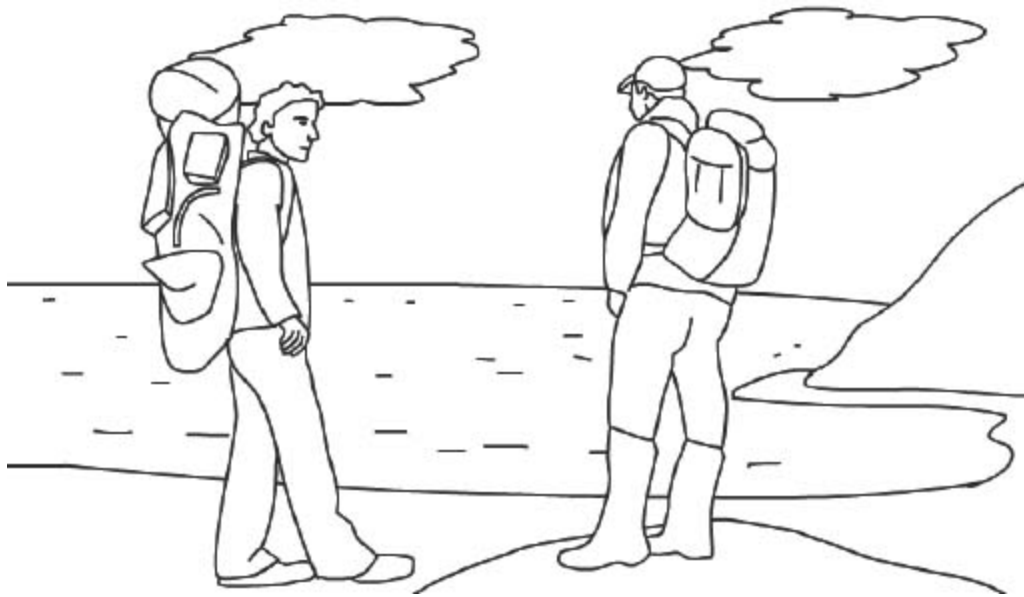
Kabir gives a formula for leading a pure, peaceful life in the following *doha*:

*Kabira man nirmal bhaya,
Jaisey ganga neera
Pachhey pachhey Hari phirey
Kahat Kabira Kabira*

A simple and pure life without malice for any one keeps the mind clean and humble. In this pure state, God will always be with you.



- ♦ A word is priceless if one knows how to use it.
- ♦ Never put off your work till tomorrow what you can do today.
- ♦ Have patience; everything comes out in time.





Something Extra

- ♦ *Try to be humble.*
- ♦ *Self-praise is of no use.*
- ♦ *Greatness lies when others praise you.*





Something Extra

- ♦ *Observe the world.*
- ♦ *Thank the faculties and opportunities given by God.*
- ♦ *Utilise them properly and prosper.*





Something Extra

- ◆ *Never give up hope.*
- ◆ *Anyone can Fall in life.*
- ◆ *Rising from a Fall is indeed heroic.*





Something Extra

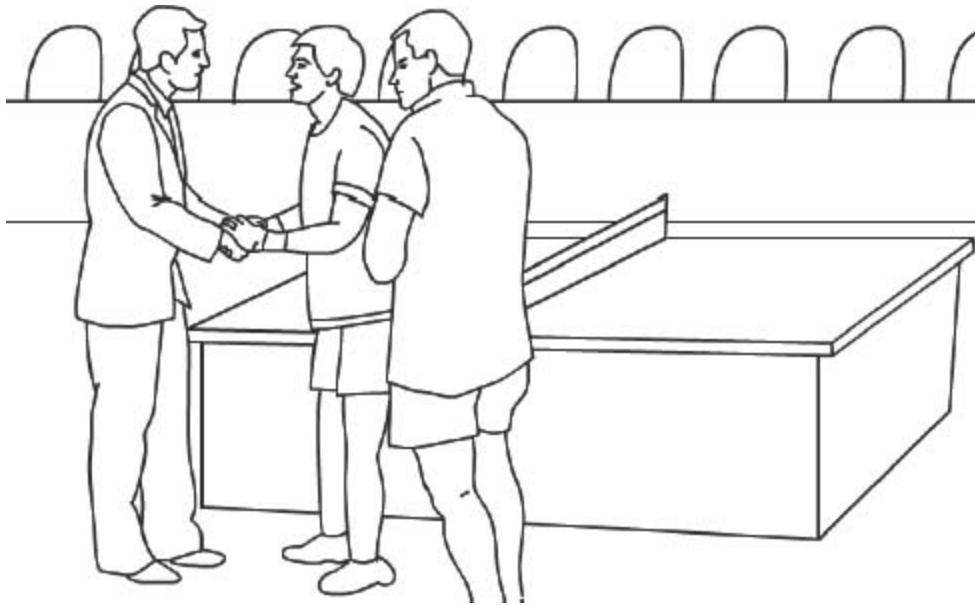
- ♦ *Inculcate good moral values in children.*
- ♦ *Children need to be made self-reliant.*
- ♦ *Problems must be solved through dialogues.*





Something Extra

- ♦ *There are certain memories which can never be erased from our minds.*
- ♦ *One always remembers his first love.*
- ♦ *If one is married for long, there develops an inseparable bond or companionship.*





Something Extra

- ♦ *For the deserving, opportunity is never a problem.*
- ♦ *A small favour to the needy returns as a mega opportunity later.*
- ♦ *Always try to diversify and avoid stagnation.*





Something Extra

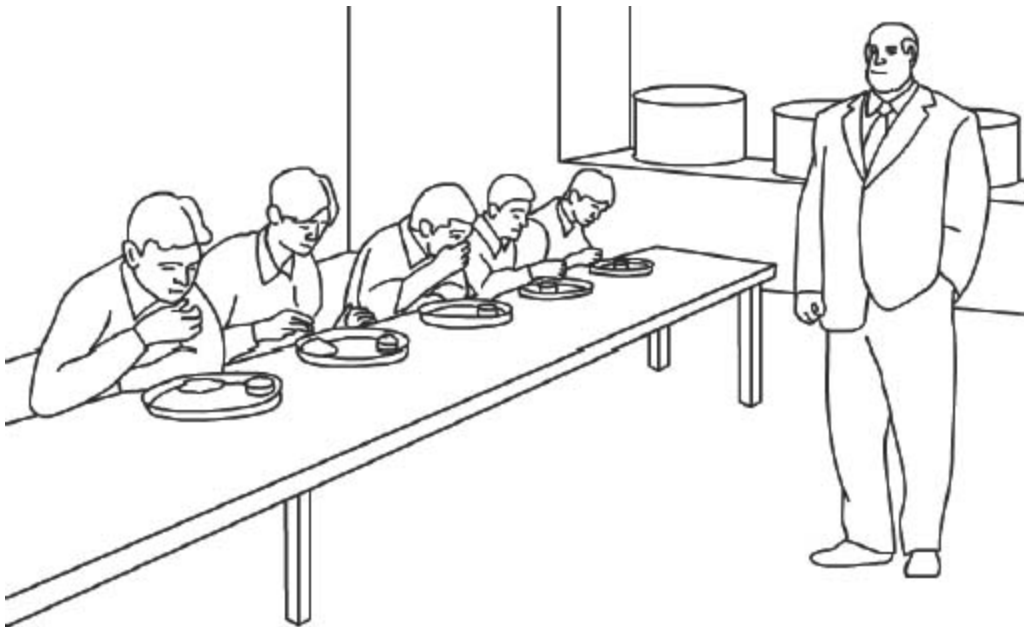
- ♦ *Material life develops bonding with material things.*
- ♦ *Never overplay spiritual matters with real life.*
- ♦ *Take one path and stick to it.*





Something Extra

- ♦ *One should not always look for other's mistakes.*
- ♦ *One must first try to rectify or improve oneself.*
- ♦ *One should never think that one is perfect.*





Something Extra

- ♦ *Hollow preaching is useless.*
- ♦ *Leading by example makes an impact.*
- ♦ *A good lesson from a good teacher remains in our minds for a lifetime.*





Something Extra

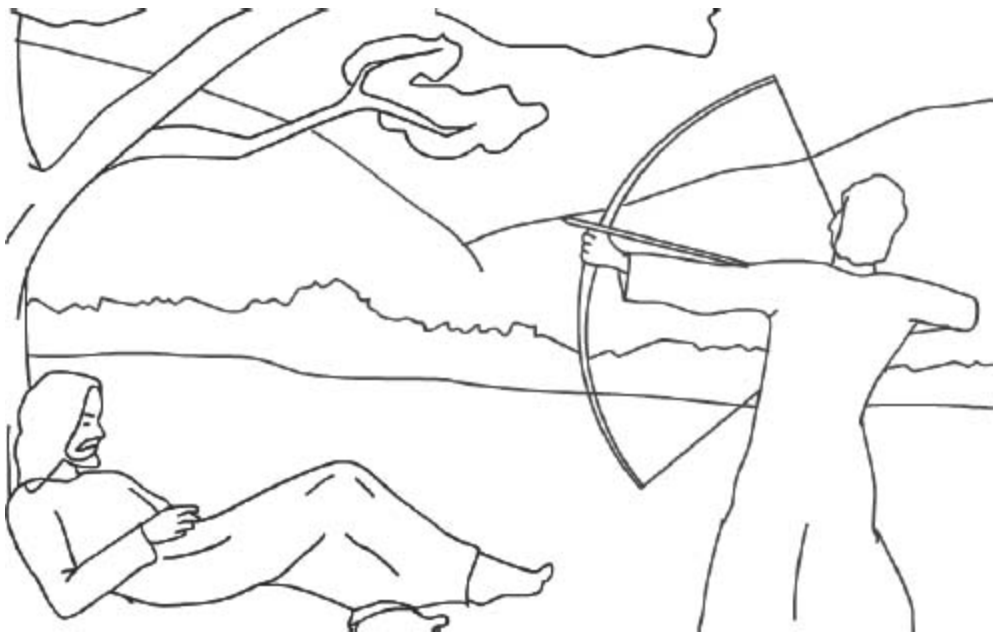
- ♦ *Fear comes out of ignorance.*
- ♦ *Cure ignorance with more and more knowledge.*
- ♦ *Confront anxiety with focussed actions.*





Something Extra

- ◆ *Never worry about things not in our control.*
- ◆ *Farsightedness is fine, but overdoing it is nonsense.*
- ◆ *Money need not always give security and mental peace.*





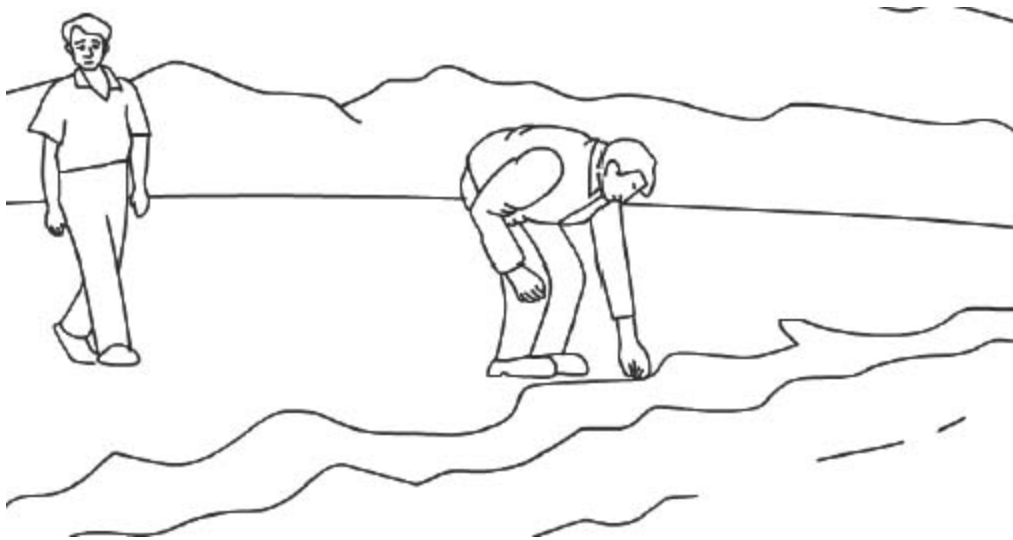
Something Extra

- ◆ *Never betray trust.*
- ◆ *Never resort to violence thinking the victim is weak.*
- ◆ *Never act on the basis of loopholes in the system.*

How Little Things Matter

Even Small Steps make a Difference!

Once a man was walking along a beach and noticed another man repeatedly picking up something from the ground and throwing it into the sea. He decided to check it out...



The man who was looking at this became curious and came closer to see what the other man was doing. He was actually picking up small fish and hurling them into the sea. These fish had been washed ashore by the sea waves and could not go back to the sea water. He asked the other man why he was doing that. The other man replied, "I am throwing them back into the water to save them." The first man said, "Yes, I know, there are thousands of small fish on the beach. Throwing back a few would not make much difference."

That man smiled picking up another fish and throwing it back to the water and said, "This will surely make a difference at least to that one!"

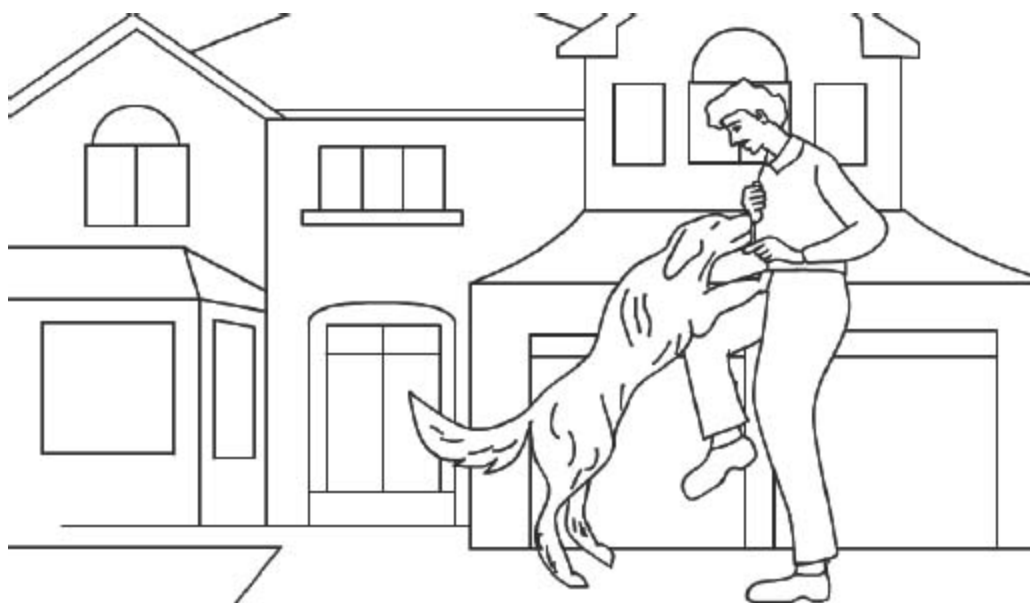
And he was right. Even little things matter!



Unwanted Desires

Too much of pampering can play spoilsport!

A man had a pet dog, which he loved very much. The pampered dog in turn would play funny games and poke pranks at its master. Finally, the master decided to mend the ways of the pet dog in a novel way.



One day, a learned man came to his house and both sat down for a chat. All of a sudden the dog came and jumped into the lap of the master, licking his cheek. The visitor did not like it and expressed his displeasure to the house owner, and admonished him for pampering the dog so much. This had the desired result; the man decided to teach a lesson to the dog. Every time the dog would jump to lick his face, it was given a kick. The dog was quick to learn and changed its habit, improved and behaved well, thereafter.

Similarly, our unwanted desires are like a pampered pet trying to overwhelm us. Proper control in the form of repeated blows and

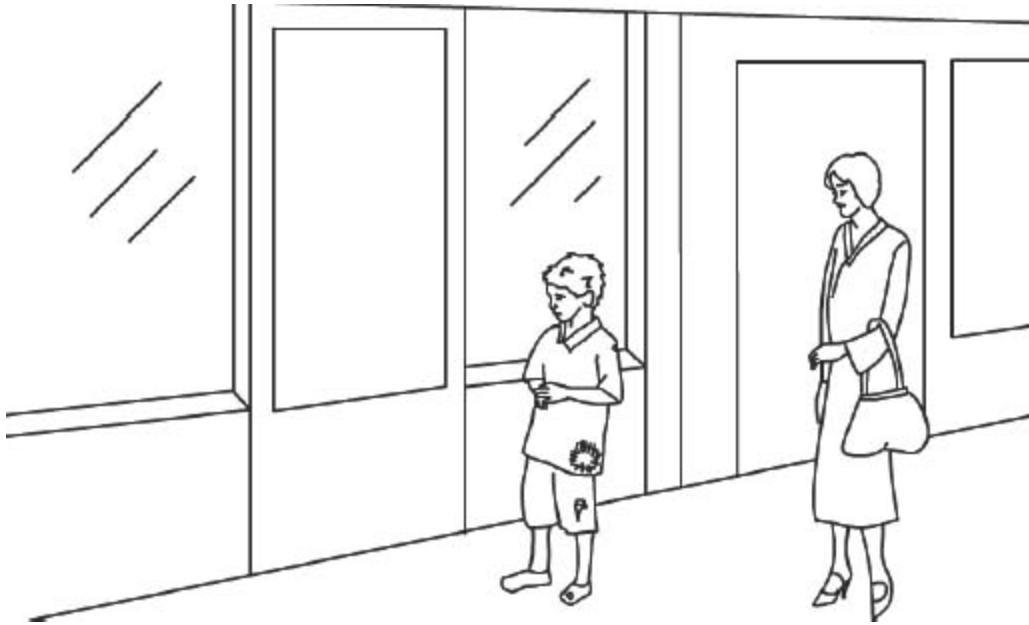
counter thoughts can cure them.



Good and Bad Turns

Forget and forgive must be the philosophy of all good persons!

Two friends were walking through a desert. During the journey, they quarrelled over a dispute and one friend slapped the other. The one, who was slapped wrote on the sand, "Today my best friend slapped me." He was hurt, but did not say anything. His logic was edifying...



As they walked on, they came to an oasis, where they decided to take bath. Unfortunately, the one who got slapped, got stuck in the mud and was about to get drowned. However, the other saved him and brought him out of the pool. The person, who was saved, engraved on the stone "Today, my best friend saved my life." The other enquired, "When I hurt you, you wrote on sand. But now, when I saved you, you engraved it on the stone. Please explain this."

The other friend said: “When someone hurts you, you should forget it soon, like a writing on the sand gets blown away. But if someone does you good, try to remember it long, like the engraving on stone that cannot be blown away.



Human Life is Precious

An elephant never knows its strength!

When a diamond merchant died, he bequeathed a rare and invaluable diamond to his wife. One day she sent out her younger son to the market to know and verify the market value of the diamond but advised him against selling it. He heard many prices from many merchants. Then...



First he took it to a vegetable seller, who offered some potatoes in exchange. Then he went to a shopkeeper, who offered a hundred rupees. Then he took it to a goldsmith, who valued it at two thousand rupees. A diamond merchant was prepared to give ten thousand rupees. At last he came to know about a man, who was an expert in rare and precious diamonds; so he asked his opinion. The man said that the diamond was worth many millions of rupees and was invaluable.

This story is an allegory of human life itself which is priceless. It depends how a person uses it and values it. Majority of human beings do not realise the true value of life and waste it in useless pursuits. Human life is priceless; it is a rare gift from the God. It should be used properly to realise its best possible value by focussing on noble causes.



Acceptance of Existence

Accepting God in broad humility!

This is the story of a Sufi mystic by the name, Junnaid who would express his gratitude to God for his existence, and the love, care and compassion bestowed on him. Once Junnaid and his companions set out on a journey and they starved without food for three days continuously. The outcome was a lesson to all...



They did not get any food and water from the villages they crossed. Thinking that his teachings were bad and selfish, the villagers shunned him and refused to help. On the third day, Junnaid and his followers were in great trouble. His disciples began to murmur and said, “Now let us see how he expresses his gratitude for his existence and what does he say in his prayers?”

When the time of prayers came, Junnaid said his prayers as usual, expressing deep gratitude to the God. After the prayer, the disciples started grumbling and said: “This is not tolerable. We have been

suffering from thirst and hunger for the last three days! We have not even slept and all are tired. Here you are still thanking God for your existence and telling that it takes care and is very compassionate!”

Junnaid heard this and said: “My prayer does not depend on any condition which is of ordinary nature. Whether I get food or not, I won’t blame my existence. They are only small things in this vast universe. It won’t matter to me if I don’t get food and water and even if I die. I will pray in the same manner. It hardly makes any difference to this vast universe whether Junnaid is dead or alive!”

The above story shows how life should be accepted by all. Life is not obliged to fulfil all our desires; it gives us what we deserve. Acceptance of life as it is will give us satisfaction and happiness. For a truly religious person, acceptance of whatever life brings is real PRAYER!



The Value of Truth

One more experiment with truth!

About 1000 years ago, in Iraq, there was a child named Abdul Qadir. One day he heard a voice urging him to undertake his greatest mission in life. He felt inspired and told his mother that he wanted to go to Baghdad to pursue higher education. The mother agreed and gave him an important advice...



She granted him permission to go, but stitched 40 gold coins inside his coat's lining, and said. "Oh, my son, since you are going, I shall bear the separation from you for the service of God. But do follow my advice—always feel the truth, speak the truth and propagate the truth, even at the risk of your life."

Qadir heard his mother carefully and promised to follow her advice; Come what may! On the way to Baghdad, he was attacked by robbers. He honestly told them about the gold coins hidden in his coat. When the robbers found them, the robbers were astonished

and the leader asked Qadir what prompted him to reveal the hidden treasure. Qadir said: “My mother had advised me to speak the truth even at the risk of my life. I promised her to follow her advice. That is why I told you the truth.” The robbers were impressed by his sincerity and felt remorseful from that day onwards and gave up robbing people and began a good life, afresh.

That small child was only eight years old when he left home to pursue knowledge and later became a great saint, who was known as Sheikh Abdul Qadir Gelani. He followed his mother’s advice; practised truth and became a saintly scholar and social reformer.

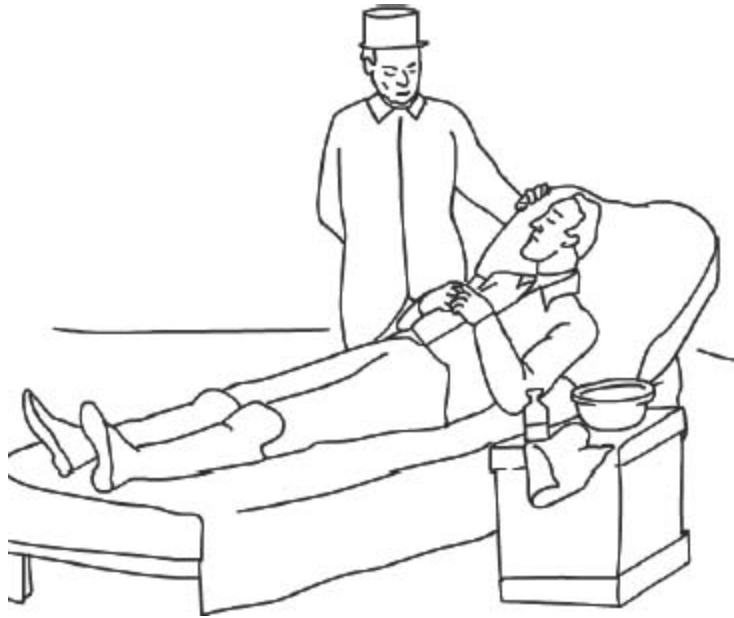
It is said that Truth is God or God is truth. We should always live by the truth.



The Great President

A Noble Soul never ceases to delight and comfort!

During the American civil war, Abraham Lincoln, the famous President of the U.S.A. visited hospitals to cheer the injured soldiers. Thus he came across an injured soldier, who was on his death bed. The President asked him, "Is there anything I can do for you?" He had a curious request....



The soldier, without knowing the identity of the visitor, said, "Please write a letter to my old mother." The President sat beside him to take the dictation. The soldier said, "Dear mother, I have been fatally injured, while fighting for my country and shall die shortly. Do not grieve for me. May God bless you." Lincoln closed the letter with a postscript "written for your son by Abraham Lincoln." When the soldier saw the letter, he was greatly astonished that his visitor was none else but the President himself. Lincoln

again enquired, "Is there anything else, I can do for you?" The young man said, "Please hold my hand so that I can die peacefully."

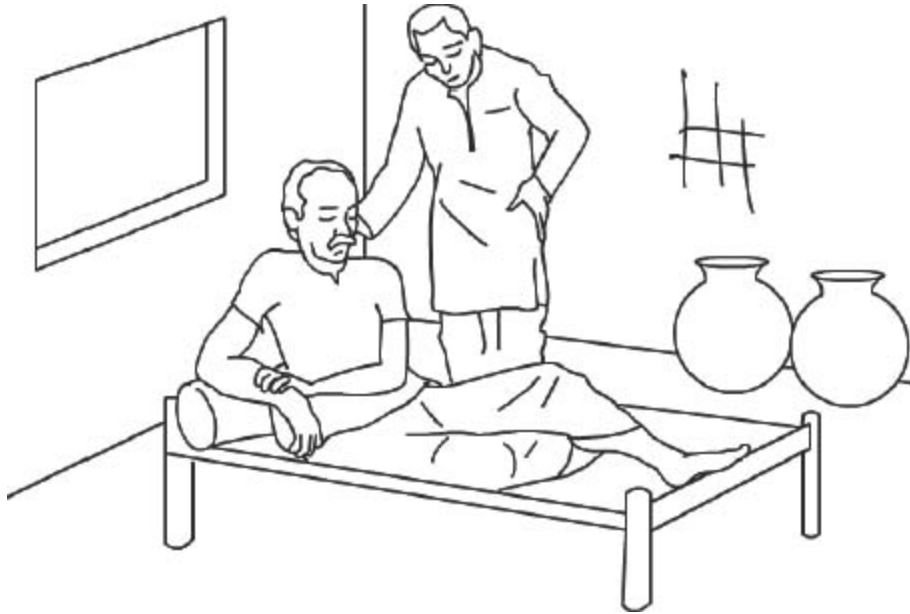
The kind President obliged and the soldier died in peace. Even small compassionate deeds matter a great deal.



The Positive View

A nightmare named debt!

A man was in heavy debt and very disturbed that he could not sleep at night because of financial burden. Deep in depression, he decided to end his life, but shared his problem with one of his close friends. The friend listened to him patiently and looked for a solution. What was the friend's game plan?



As soon as the man finished his words, his friend asked him about the assets he possessed in terms of money and property. He did not talk anything about the debt. The man was surprised and became conscious of the fact that he possessed so many things. He had a house, agricultural land, lot of grain in his store and several cattle besides many friends and well wishers.

The situation changed entirely. He then had no worries about the debt and realised that he had enough resources and there was no cause for anxiety. He became cheerful and was full of confidence

that he can solve his problem. All this happened because of the positive view expressed by the friend who showed him the right way.



Encouragement Leads to Success

When one door closes many other doors will open automatically!

A word of encouragement can often lead to success. This is the success story of Nathaniel Hawthorne — one of the greatest names in American literature. What transpired in his later life?



When he lost his job, he came home heartbroken to tell the news to his wife. But she surprised him with an exclamation of joy, saying “ Now you can write your book.” He said, “But what shall we live with, when I am writing this book.” His wife opened a drawer and brought out a lot of money. He asked: “Where did you get all this money?” She replied, “I always knew that you are a genius. So I kept saving whatever you used to give me for housekeeping. So this money is enough to keep us going for the whole year.”

As a result of her encouragement and trust in her husband's ability, Hawthorne produced one of the greatest novels of American literature.



Curious Questions - Right Answers

Turning puzzles into delightful embarrassments!

A King asked his minister three puzzling questions and asked him to find answers. What were the questions and what were the answers.”



The questions were the following:-

1. What is that which you give here for which you get a reward here?
2. What is that which you give here for which you get a reward there?
3. What is that which you give here and for which you get a reward neither here nor there?

The minister said: “Your majesty, please give me Rs 30,000/- and I shall give you answers after a week.” The King gave him the

money. After a week, the minister beseeched the King, “Sir, I deposited Rs 10,000/- in a bank, in your account. I have given it here and you will be rewarded with interest here, anytime you want. This answers your first question.” He continued to say “ Sir, I purchased food for Rs 10,000/- and distributed it among the poor and the needy. This was done with your money, on your behalf. You have given this money here for which you will be rewarded in the next birth. This answers your second question.” The minister added further, “The balance Rs 10,000/- I wasted on wild pursuits, wine, women, dances, etc. For all these, you will be rewarded neither here, nor there. This answers your third question. “The King was satisfied with the three answers and rewarded the minister.



A Legend from the Puranas

Keeping Busy is a positive way to deflect negative thoughts and feelings!

A man had lot of work and he felt tired and unhappy at the end of the day. He was a devotee of Lord Shiva, so he invoked Lord Shiva's help. Lord Shiva appeared before him and he pleaded: "Lord, please send me someone who can carry out my orders whatsoever."



Lord Shiva granted his wish and sent *Betaal* to do the needful. But there was a condition attached to it. He should never keep the *Betaal* without work, otherwise he would kill the man.

The man was much pleased and he got many things done every day.

One day, he had no work for the *Betaal* and he realised that without work, the *Betaal* would kill him. So he asked *Betaal* to erect a pillar which he did. Then he told him to climb to the top and then

come down and then keep repeating this process. Thus, the *Betaal* was kept occupied endlessly.

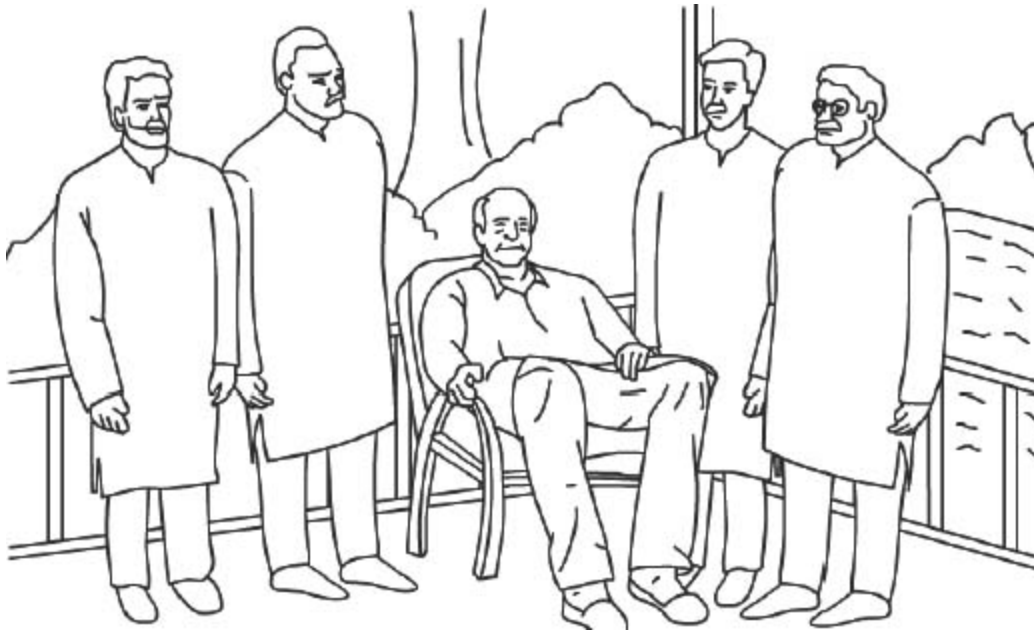
In this story, there is lesson that our mind is like the *Betaal*. It should always be kept busy in doing something productive, otherwise an idle mind becomes a devil's workshop.



Different Perspectives

Seeing the Big Picture in a Hard Way!

A man had four sons. When they grew up as adults, he wanted to teach them on how to judge things properly and not superficially. He sent them on errands, turn by turn, to go and see a fig tree, in different seasons. What was the result?



The first one went in the winter and reported that the tree had a bent and looked ugly. The second one went in the spring and found it all green and full of buds. The third son went in the summer and said it was full of blossoms, smelt sweet and looked beautiful. The fourth son, who went during the ‘autumn’ had an entirely different view. He said the tree was bearing fruits and full of life and fulfilment. Thus, all the four sons saw the same tree in different seasons and derived different perspectives of the same thing. The father then told them that while each one was correct in his own way, yet no one got the complete picture of the tree.

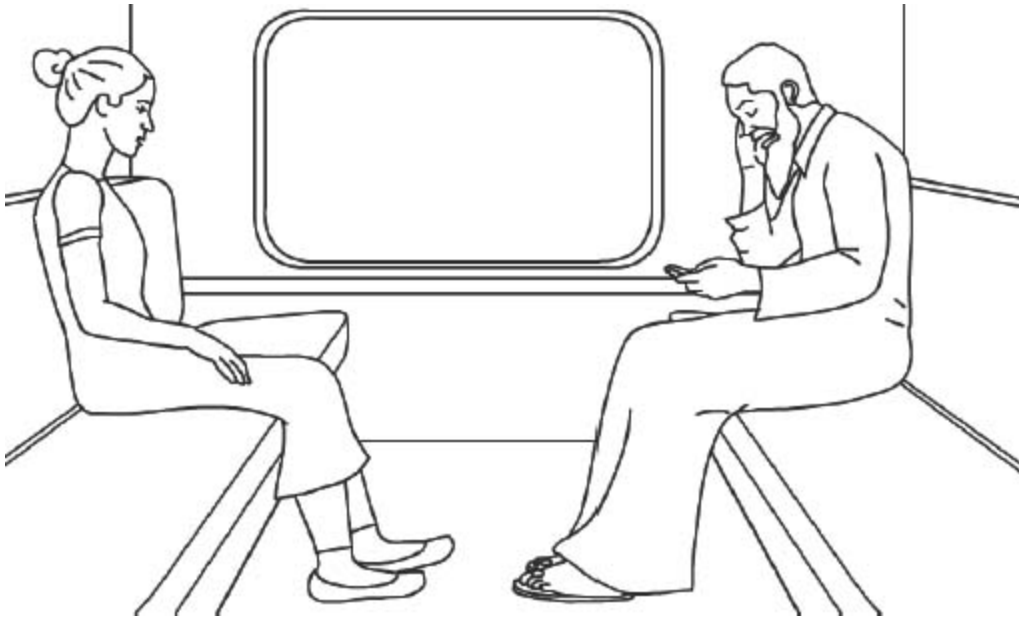
In the same manner, we humans view our lives in different ways in different circumstances. In difficulty, we cry and feel sad; we laugh in good times and become angry when frustrated. A mature, wise person will judge life in totality and will arrive at a balanced view of life.



An Astrologer's Dilemma

False Sense of Greatness can Crumble in a second!

A lady was travelling by train from Delhi to Agra. A man seated next to her was an astrologer, who was going to Agra to meet his clients for whom he had given appointments. He was a well known astrologer. He would not only forecast the destiny, but also suggest means to improve or even cure bad things.



During the journey, he had been confirming his appointments on the cell phone and had busy schedules for the whole day. But suddenly, the train came to a halt midway between Mathura and Agra due to a mechanical fault and there was no early hope of resumption of the journey. The astrologer became desperate as there was no way he could meet his clients. His cell phone also stopped working due to failure in the battery. Finally, he had to borrow the cell phone from the lady, who reluctantly obliged him and was amused to see his predicament. On the cell phone, he asked

his agent at Agra to cancel all his appointments due to this inconvenience. His clients were all angry and began shouting at the agent, as it could be made out from their voices on the cell phone. It was a pity that an astrologer who could forecast the destiny of his clients could not forecast his own destiny!

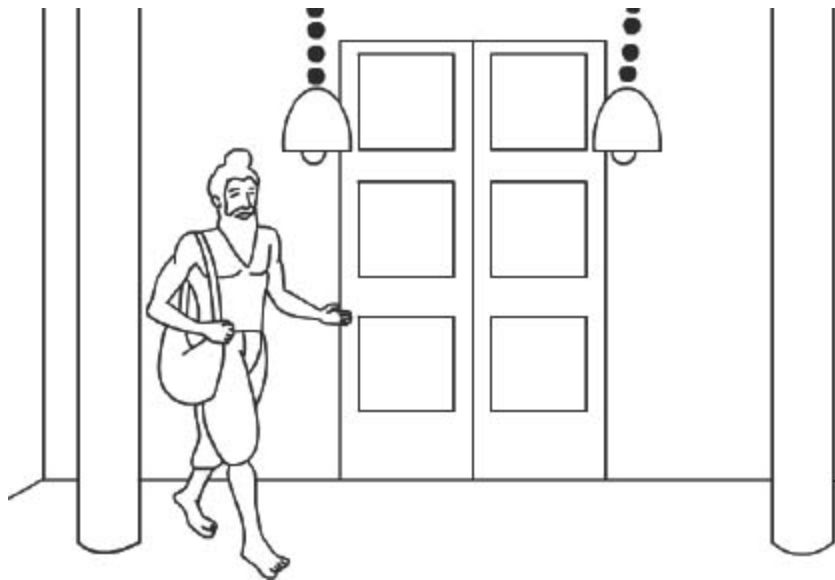


A Story of Love and Service

Service to the mankind is the best form of worship!

Many years ago, there was a pious man who led a good, cosy life but lacked satisfaction in life. He wanted to discover the reason and define its real purpose. Did he get answers!.....

One day he renounced his house and went to the Himalayas to seek enlightenment. After prolonged penance, he came to the conclusion that his soul was divine and God was within. He felt elated at the realisation, and started back to the plains after leaving his Himalayan abode.



On his way back, he saw a beautiful temple. Since he was tired, he came close to it but found its door closed. He knocked the door and a voice asked, “Who are you?” He replied, “I am a devotee, who has realised God.” The voice within said, “Go away, my temple cannot have two of us.”

The man went back to the Himalayas again to seek more penance. After a long process of self-enquiry and inner exploration, he came back to the same temple again and knocked at the closed door. The voice within again enquired, "Who are you?" The man replied, "I am same as you and none else." At this, the door opened and the man entered and became one with the presiding deity, in deep meditation. After a long period of time, the man grew bored inside the stone image. He therefore, came out of it, left the temple and mingled with the common people.

He sought the company of all and sundry. He loved everybody; served the needy and the helpless; and consoled them in their miseries sharing their joys and sorrows. In doing so, he drew boundless satisfaction and discovered the true meaning of existence in love and selfless service.

One day, the man happened to pass by the same temple and found its door open. The voice from within said, "Come inside, I will give you liberation and freedom from all suffering." However, the man said: "Sorry, I can't accept your invitation. I have to work for my people and I can't leave them even for my own liberation." Then, all of a sudden, he experienced a flash of enlightenment which transformed his whole being. He found himself stretched in the vastness of the sky, moving all over the space, enjoying and mingling with the whole creation. This was a thrilling experience of his all—pervading existence in the infinite drama of creation.



An Incident of True Religion

Small favours can deliver big satisfaction!

True religion is not all about the observance of rites and rituals. It lies in acts of kindness and compassion!



A man was walking on the road side, where heavy rainwater had flooded the road. There was nothing, but just water on the road and nothing else was visible. He was about to cross the road, when he saw a car speeding towards him. He got scared, but the car slowed down as it came close to him and it stopped and allowed him to cross the road. Then the driver smiled at him waved and sped away. The driver of the car left a pleasant impression in the mind of the roadside traveller, who saluted him for his consideration and kind act.

In another case, a man, who, after finishing his job in an office failed to get any kind of transport to go to his hotel. Greatly upset, he stood on the road, alarmed at the sight of menacing dark clouds

as it would rain any moment. Just then a gleaming big car pulled up beside him in front of the big house, where he was standing. The gentleman sitting on the wheel, sensing his distress, enquired about it. Knowing his problem, he asked the man to sit in his car and dropped him at his hotel. He then went back as the house where this man was standing belonged to the owner of the car. What an act of kindness even at the cost of personal inconvenience!







Something Extra

- ♦ *Never be scared to confront anti-socials.*
- ♦ *Never allow some one exploit our fears.*
- ♦ *Stand up for the cause of the poor and weak.*

Strange But True!

Life is a sum total of many surprises!

Kanshi (name changed) was a poor labourer and he had a costly eye operation. He had no money to do it. But...



Kanshi, aged 58, lived with his wife and son. The latter worked in a factory and earned around Rs. 3000. The family struggled to meet the two ends. Kanshi's wife also had to nurture her 3 year-old grandson as the daughter-in-law had ditched them.

Kanshi was suffering from a serious eye problem and was advised immediate operation at an eye hospital. At the hospital, he was told that the operation would cost around Rs. 20,000/-. He came out of the hospital dejected as he could hardly afford the hospital expenses. He lost all hope and waited at the bus stop to go home. At that point of time, there came a rich, well-dressed person, from nowhere and asked Kanshi, "Hey, why are you looking so depressed?" Kanshi was surprised to see the stranger, but narrated

his sad story. The kind stranger took him back to the hospital and fixed his operation, paying the advance amount. He also told Kanshi to come to the hospital the next day for operation. Kanshi was operated upon; and the stranger paid all the expenses and even arranged an auto to go home. Kanshi came home and the family was all wonder about the kind stranger who helped them benignly.

Is this real charity or a miracle!

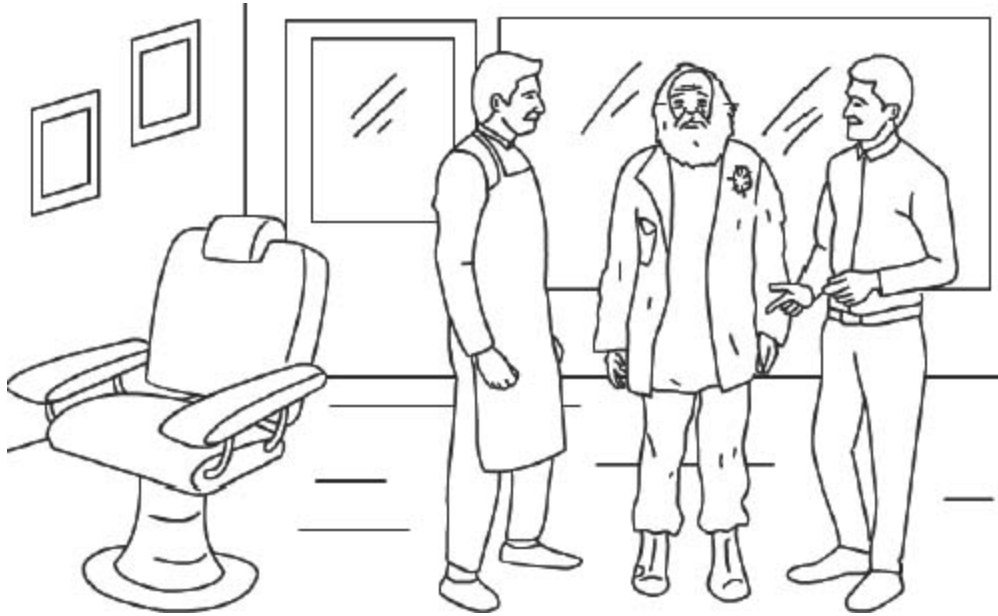


Existence of God

Initiative is the key to accomplishment!

God is a mystery. Some people believe in God, some do not. This is a story about the existence of God.

A man went to a barber for a haircut, where he had a chat with the barber on God. The barber said: “I don’t believe in God.” The customer asked why he was a non-believer....



The barber replied, “You just go out in the street and see that you won’t find God, anywhere.” He further argued. “If God exists, why there is so much pain and suffering. A loving God should not allow this to happen. So I can’t think that God exists.”

The barber’s argument made the customer think for a while and he did not want to enter into an unnecessary discussion, so he left the shop after the haircut. When he came out in the street, he found a dirty man with long unwashed hair and unshaven beard. He

brought him to the barber's shop and said, "Look barbers do not exist." The barber said, "You can't say so, I am a barber standing before you so you can't say that barbers do not exist." The man said, "No, the barbers don't exist. If they existed, there would be no people with dirty long hair and untrimmed beard, like this man."

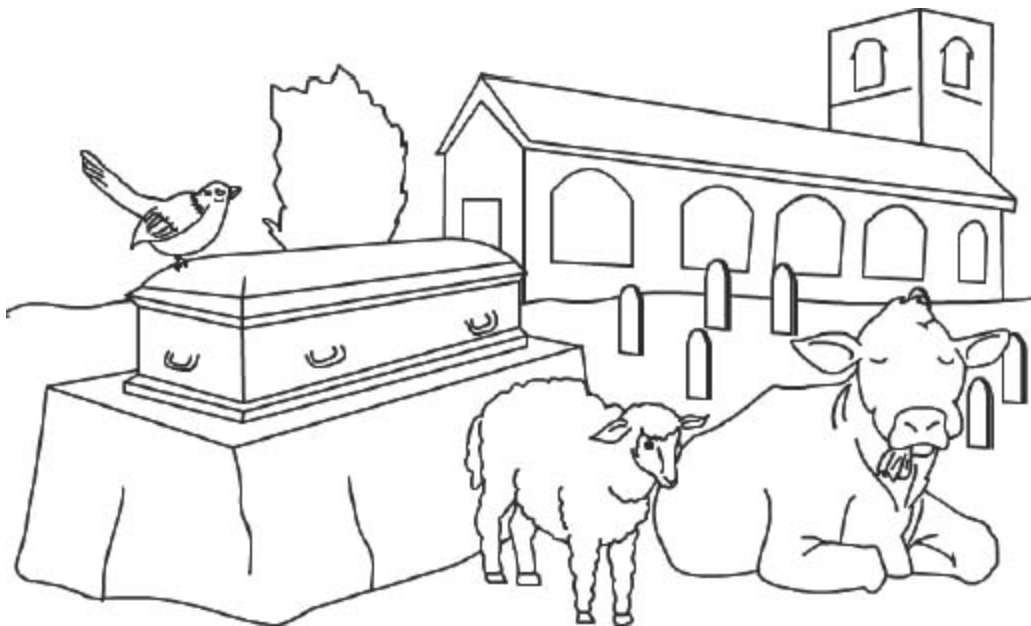
The barber said, "Oh, but barbers do exist. This man is so because he did not go to a barber." The customer chuckled to say. "Yes, that is the point. God too exists. That is what happens when people do not go to Him and do not seek His help. That is why, there is so much of pain and suffering. This story means that we can find God within us if we completely surrender to God. We cannot find him in the external world or see with our eyes. We have to feel and experience the existence of God for which we need to have full faith and devotion.



G.B. Shaw and the Vegetarian Diet

Uncompromising Conviction differentiates heroes from the ordinary!

This is an interesting story from the life of famous writer G.B. Shaw, who was a staunch supporter of vegetarian diet. Did Shaw attempt to compromise?



When G.B. Shaw fell seriously ill, the doctors advised him to start taking meat, otherwise he would die. Being a strict vegetarian, Shaw refused to heed that advice. The doctors again warned him of fatal consequences. However, Shaw dictated his will which read, as follows:-

“I solemnly declare that my coffin when carried to the graveyard, be accompanied by mourners of the following categories: first birds; second sheep, lambs and cows and other animals of the kind; third live fish from an aquarium. Each of these mourners should carry a

placard bearing the inscription: O Lord, be gracious to our benefactor; G.B. Shaw, who gave his life for saving ours.”

Some people eat meat because they think that it promotes physical strength. On the contrary, the elephant, the ox and the hare are known for their strength and physical capacity. It is, not at all necessary to eat meat as God has given us grains, vegetables, fruits, honey and milk which can easily meet our requirements of nutrition. There is absolutely no need for us to eat meat for which an innocent life has to be sacrificed.



All for a Piece of Loin-Cloth

Invention is the mother of necessity!

Under instruction from his Guru, a disciple built a thatched hut away from the city and started living in it for doing his *sadhna* or spiritual exercise. Soon some incidents took place....



Every morning, after taking bath, he would spread his wet loin cloth on a tree for drying. Then he would go to the neighbouring village to beg food. One day, when he returned, he found his loin cloth torn up by rats. So the villagers gave him a new one. After a few days, again the rats tore away the new piece, so he approached the villagers for a new one. The villagers advised him to keep a cat, which he did and the cat killed all the rats. Now the cat needed something to eat for survival. So the *sadhu* went to the village to beg some milk for her. The villagers then advised him to keep a cow so that he can get milk for the cat and avoid begging in the village. So he kept a cow, but the cow needed fodder to eat. The

villagers again advised him to grow crops in the land around his hut, which he did. He had now enough crops, not only for the cow's fodder, but also for sale. So with the money so earned, he built a farmhouse and became a rich landlord, in due course. Consequently, he got married, established a household and was no longer a *sadhu*. He became a rich householder and lived like other worldly householders.

After long time, his Guru came to see him and was astonished to see his disciple living in this manner. So he enquired about it, "What is all this, my child?" The disciple felt ashamed and explained, "Sir, this was all for a single piece of loin-cloth."

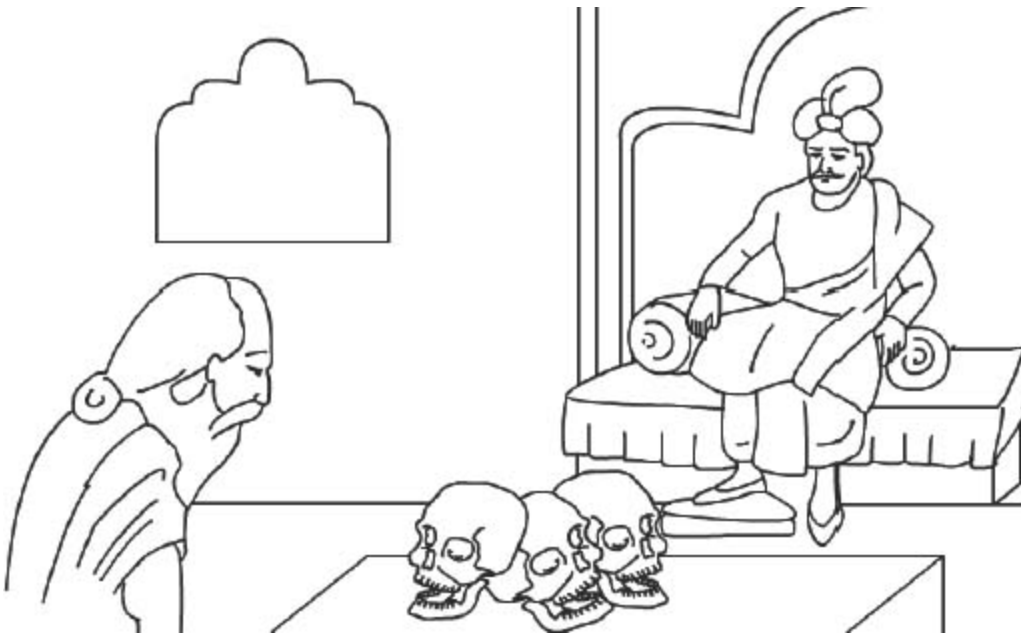
This shows how ordinary folks get involved in their worldly activities in order to fulfil their desires.



The Story of Three Skulls

Knowledge that does not convert into Wisdom is Waste!

A King had three skulls and he asked the wisest man in his kingdom, as to which one was the best. To ascertain this, a test was conducted....



The wise man took a rod and passed it through the ear of a skull. The rod came out of the second ear. Then he put the rod in an ear of the second skull it came out of the mouth. When he inserted the rod in the ear of the third skull, it went right into the heart. The wise man recommended the third skull as the best.

The first skull belonged to those people, who hear words of wisdom through one ear and without thinking anything, let them out through the other ear. The second skull represented those people, who do not practise the wisdom so acquired, but is keen to preach it to others. Regarding the third skull, such people, after

hearing wisdom, absorb it into their hearts and practise it in their real, daily lives.



Detachment

Keeping the right distance is a part of safe driving!

A Jewish saint underwent persecution in Germany, under the Nazi regime. Without caring for the abuses on him, the saint bore the physical torture by detaching himself from his body and endured it as a silent spectator.



He practised a mental attitude of detachment which saved him even from death. Another person, in his place would have either died of torture or committed suicide. The practice of detachment helped him to service.

Detachment makes a person strong, but it has to be practised over a long period before one succeeds in acquiring such an attitude through will power and determination.



Something Extra

- ♦ *Pleasure of the body or physical comfort must not be the sole aim in life.*
- ♦ *Never develop excessive attachment towards anything / anybody.*
- ♦ *Adverse situations can be faced with a sense of detachment.*

Good News - Bad News

Never think money is for self-indulgence!

One day, a priest stood before the congregation and said: “I have both good news and bad news for you.” The parish people were puzzled! They waited.



First the bad news, the priest said: “The church required a sum of US\$1000 to repair the leaking roof. The repairs are urgent, otherwise the roof will fall down.” At this the people groaned. Then the priest said, “Now the good news, enough money is available to carry out repairs, so there is nothing to worry.” Everybody smiled and heaved a sigh of relief. The priest again said: “There is again some bad news and it is that the money is still in your pockets.”



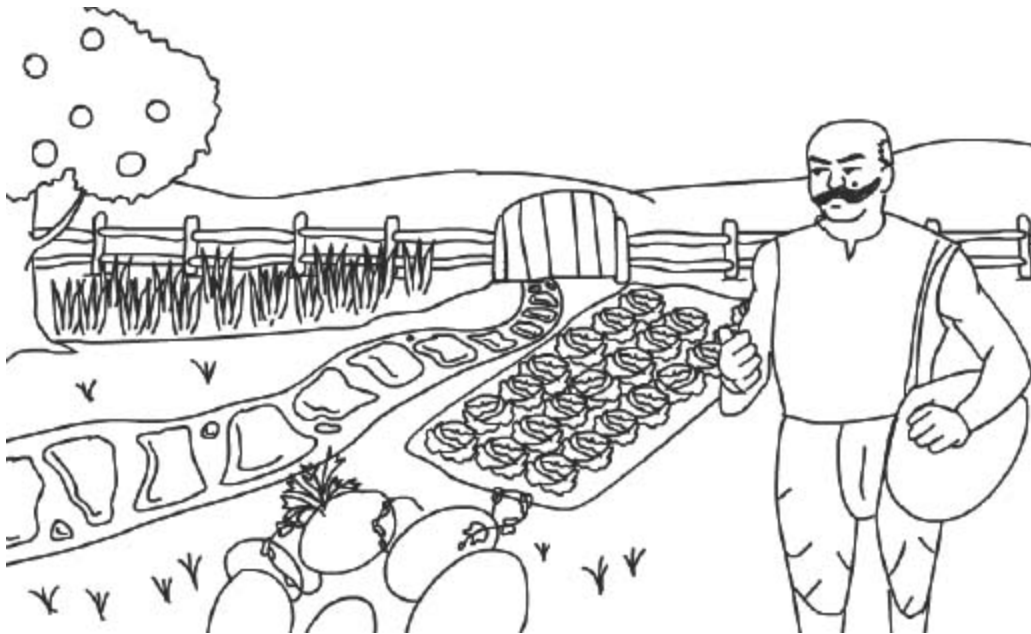
Something Extra

- ♦ *Use money to build up your virtues.*
- ♦ *Spend a portion of money for the community.*
- ♦ *Unethical money can be a cause of tension too.*

Daydreaming

The King of Fantasy World may not actually rule the kingdom!

One day a peasant went to a vegetable garden with the purpose of stealing some potatoes. He made some long-term plans in mind and his daydreaming went on. Finally....



He thought, “I will steal a sack full and sell it. With that money, I will buy a hen, who will lay eggs which will produce lots of chicken. By selling the chicken, I will buy a cow which will give lots of milk. Then I will buy another cow and in this way, by selling more milk, I will buy more cows and open a dairy farm. I will not let anyone to steal my cows as I shall keep guard over them.”

He was so much carried away with these thoughts that he forgot that he was in someone else’s garden. Then there was some noise of a watchman coming. The man thought that a thief had come to steal in his farmhouse. So he shouted at the top of his voice. The

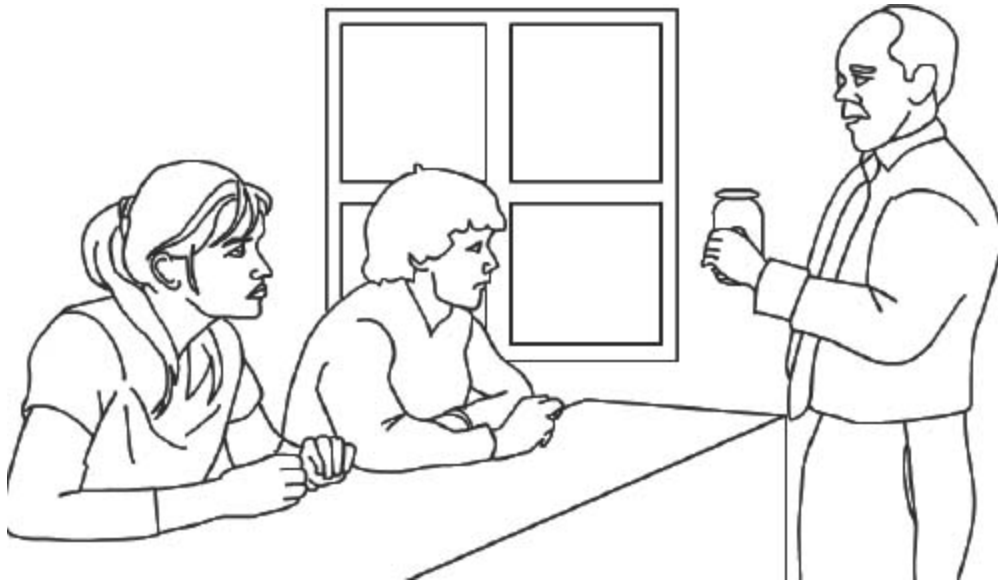
watchman heard him and caught the peasant stealing and gave him a hard beating. That was the result of daydreaming.



A Jar of Life

Right priorities are crucial for Success!

A professor was teaching in a Philosophy class. He picked up an empty jar and filled it with golf balls. He then asked the students whether the jar was full and they agreed that it was. He was trying to explain a fact of life. What was it?



The professor then picked up some pebbles, put them into the jar and shook it. The pebbles rolled into the empty space between the golf balls. He then asked the students again whether the jar was full, they agreed. Next, the professor took some sand and poured into the jar. The sand then spread into the empty space still left; he asked again if the jar was full. The students said yes.

The professor then took a glass of water and poured into the jar filling the empty space between the sand. The professor then said, "Now, I want you to imagine that this jar represents your life. The golf balls are the important things, like your family, friends and

habits, etc. The pebbles represent other materials, possessions like house, job, car, etc. The sand represents everything else, the small stuff.”

He further continued, “If you put the sand into the jar first, then no space will be left, for the pebbles and the golf balls. Likewise, if you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff of life, you will never have the time for important things.”

In this way, the professor taught his students to pay more attention and give priority to the more important matters in life.

One student asked a question, “What was the role of water.” The professor replied, “The water shows no matter how full your life may appear to be, there is always a scope for some improvement. You can always add something more useful to life.”



Promise of a Politician

Quick to promise and too quick to forget!

During election time, a politician undertook a tour of his constituency and asked people to vote for him. They asked, “What will you do for us, if we vote for you?” He had lot to promise....



“The politician thought for a while and said, “I will do something big for you, which no other politician can do.” A clever voter questioned, “But what is that actually?” The politician, again thought for a moment and then blurted out, “I will build a bridge for you.” He said this without knowing whether a bridge was needed or not!”

The puzzled people asked, “But we have no river here, so where is the need for a bridge?”

The politician replied, “Never mind, we will first make a river for you!”

How funny!



Something Extra

- ♦ *Develop the spirit of questioning.*
- ♦ *Never fall for the lure of quick promises.*
- ♦ *Avoid those who insult intelligence and are foolish.*

A Holy Man and the Humble Worm

Live life to the full!

Long ago, a sage was walking on a road, where hundreds of chariots passed daily. There he saw a worm furiously slithering away. He questioned it and got some amazing answers....



The sage asked the worm, “ Why are you hurrying, what are you afraid of?” The worm replied, “I hear the noise of chariots which are drawing nearer. They will crush me. I must run and get out of the way. Sir life is precious and I won’t like to die, if I can help. I don’t want to go from the heaven of life to the hell of death.” The sage said, “ But you are only a worm! What do you know about joy and heaven in life! You should be happier as dead.” The worm replied, “ Sir in spite of what you say, living like as I am, I have got used to it. I may be a small worm but I have my own enjoyments. In my last life, I was a wealthy man but I performed wild misdeeds and now I am repenting for my follies. I am now doing penance.”

The sage said, “Penance goes a long way. Since you have formed a mind now, you will achieve liberation one day. If you like, I can

change your condition.” The worm agreed. Soon a large chariot came and its wheel crushed the worm. Passing through several incarnations, the worm finally achieved liberation.



Love of God

Patience pays!

One day prophet Abraham, while sitting before his house, saw an old man walking with great difficulty, with the aid of a stick. Abraham asked him to take rest in his house and accept his hospitality for the day. Was it a sure proof of Abraham's kindness?...



The old man first declined, but upon persuasion by Abraham accepted his offer. The old man had his food and Abraham asked him to join him for prayer. He said, "I do not believe in God." At this Abraham got angry and turned him out of his house and went to sleep.

At night, Abraham had a dream in which God asked, "I sent you an old man to look after, what have you done with him?" Abraham replied, "God, that man was a non-believer, so I turned him away." God said, "I know that he does not believe in Me, but I have looked

after him all this long, and you could not do that for one night.” Abraham felt sorry, apologised to God and brought the old man back.



Marriage by Destiny or Default!

Sometimes even an onlooker gets the trophy!

A man fell in love with a girl and wanted to marry her. So he would write long letters to her, expressing his love. Did he marry her? Read on to find out....



After sending her dozens of letters, he came to meet her. To his dismay, the man discovered that the girl had fallen in love with the postman, the man who delivered her those letters and married him.

How strange! Is it marriage by destiny or default?



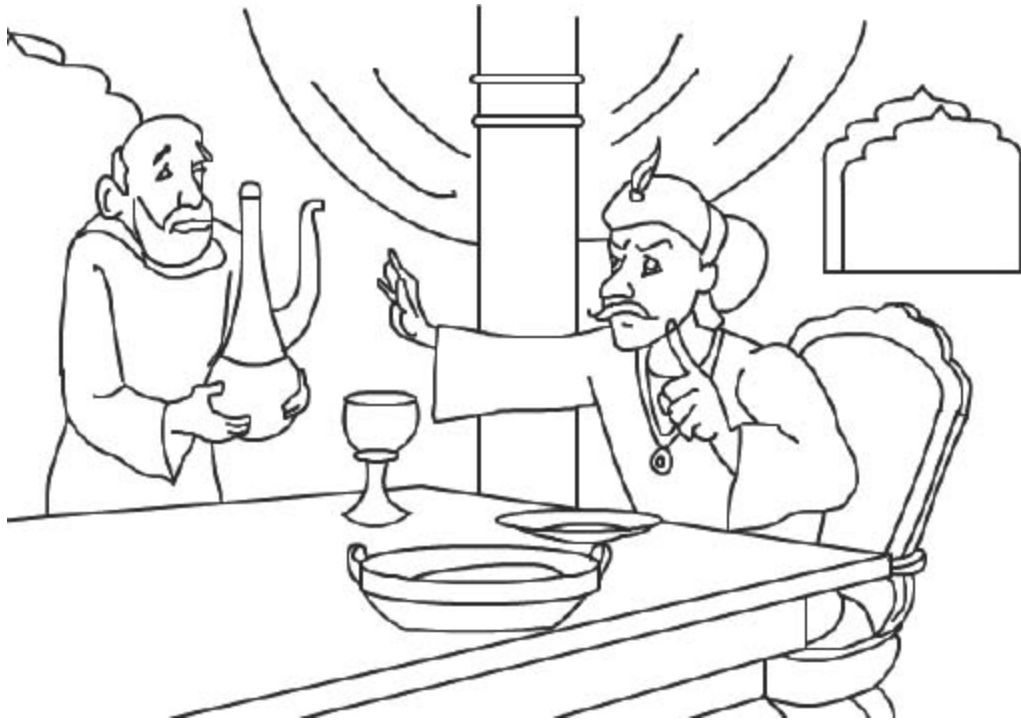
Something Extra

- ♦ *A man of action is preferred over a man of imagination.*
- ♦ *Personal interaction is a must for the progress of any enterprise or relationship.*
- ♦ *Move on with a smile when a hurdle comes across.*

How Wisdom Can Help?

The seat of knowledge is in the head of wisdom.

Emperor Jahangir was famous for his upright dispensing of justice. One day, his servant was pouring wine in the emperor's cup. Accidentally, a drop of wine fell on the King's robe. Greatly annoyed, Jahangir sentenced him to death. But the servant was unfazed...



The servant remained unperturbed and without hesitation, he poured the entire cup of wine over the king. This made Jahangir even angrier and he shouted; "Why did you do this even after hearing the death sentence?"

The servant replied, "Your majesty, you are renowned for your justice. Just think, after my death, people would rebuke you for giving me death sentence just because a drop of wine fell on you,

by mistake! I did not relish the thought that your fame for justice might be thus maligned. I therefore, poured the whole cup on you so that justice appeared justified!”

The emperor was pleased, and he pardoned his servant and also rewarded him with money and promotion.

This is how wisdom can save even in great crisis.

